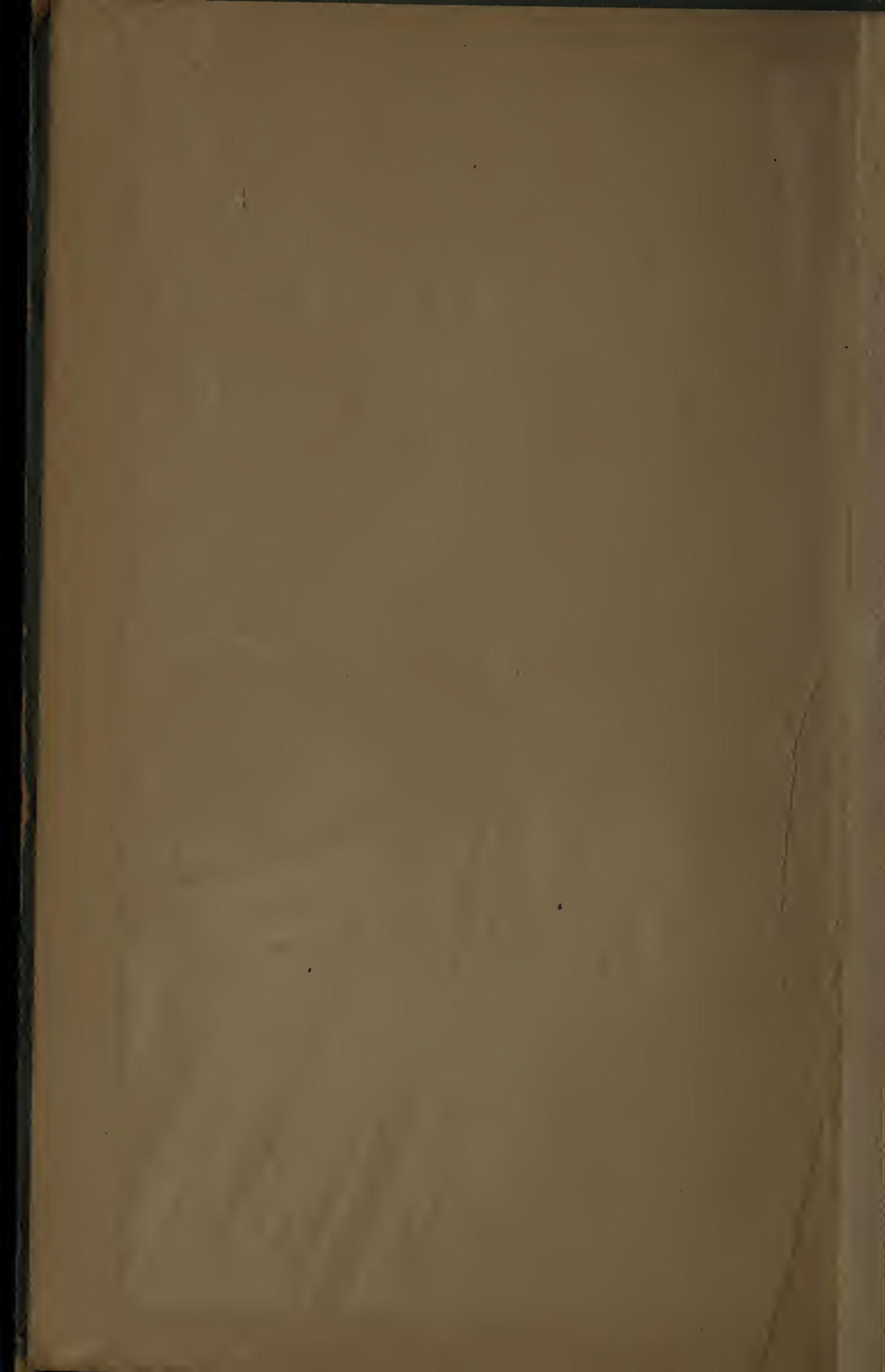


THOUGHTS OF
THE CURÉ OF ARS

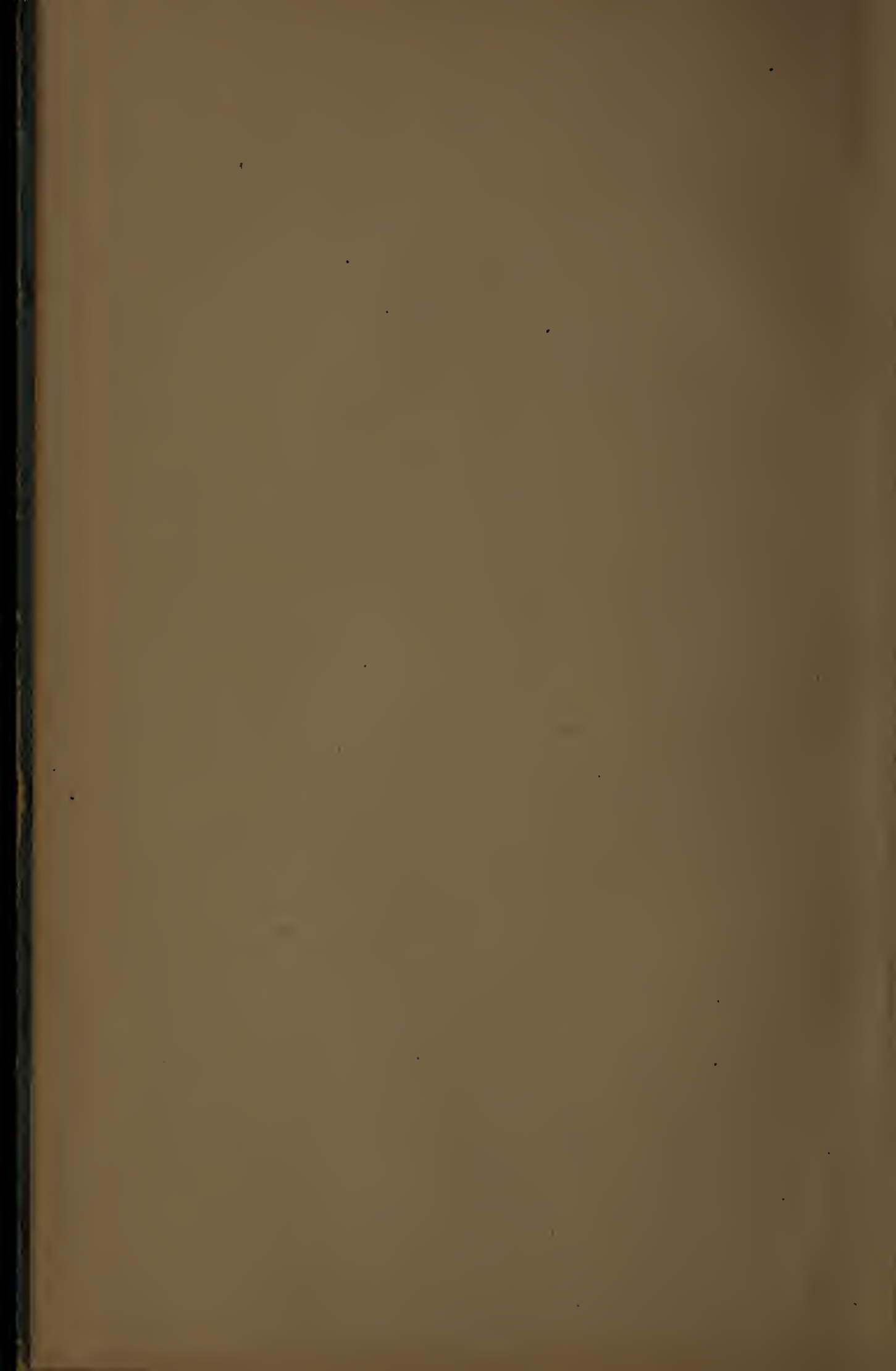
Translated by
PAULINE P. STIMP

BRUNNEN

BX4700
V5S9



Bx4700
V559



Thoughts of the Curé of Ars

(John Baptist Vianney)

“Sicut odor agri pleni.”

— *Gen. xxvii. 27.*

Translated by Pauline P. Stump.



*Published for the
Benefit of the Boston Carmel.*



*Boston :
Flynn & Mahony, Publishers.
1896.*

Copyright, 1896,
By FLYNN & MAHONY.

Press of John Cashman & Co.
Boston, Mass.

BX4700,
V5S9

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

Go, little flowers, whither the hand of the good God sends you. Open your petals, exhale your fragrance and embalm the souls of all who see you : *Florete, Flores . . . Date Odorem Et Frondete In Gratiam.*

Be not ephemeral, like those flowers of our gardens that bloom and die in a day; but bear fruits — fruits containing the seeds of vitality: *Semen Est Verbum.*

May every word of these pages, falling upon the soil of upright hearts enriched by fervent prayer and meditation, be like the germ which, heated and nourished by favorable influences, expands into a beautiful flower, a magnificent tree. Let a new stem arise therefrom, with its branches, its perfumes, its treasures, — the fruits of honor and sanctity: *Flores Mei, Fructus Honoris Et Honestatis ! Amen !*

A. MENNIN.

PARIS, VIGIL OF OUR LORD'S NATIVITY, 1867.

16766

The Infant JESUS offers His friends a tiny bouquet, culled from one of his choicest gardens. Although years have passed since these flowerets, springing from the heart of the saintly Curé of Ars, first opened their petals to the light of day, and many who then enjoyed their beauty and fragrance have descended to the tomb, even as the holy Curé himself, yet, like all other plants of celestial origin, they are imperishable ; time's withering hand neither leaves blight upon their beauty nor diminishes the sweet odor which they erst possessed. May all who receive them now be embalmed with this odor ; and, while praising GOD for the graces that He vouchsafed to bestow upon the work of His own hands, — the man whose life of heroic abnegation challenges the admiration even of unbelievers and loudly calls for a place on our altars, — may they, during the devious course of life's pilgrimage, learn to look beyond earth's mists and vapors to that home on high, where an incorruptible crown awaits all who have fought the good fight.

TRANSLATOR.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

I. — SALVATION	7
II. — LOVE FOR GOD	8
III. — THE PURE SOUL	10
IV. — THE HOLY SPIRIT	12
V. — THE BLESSED VIRGIN	15
VI. — PRAYER	16
VII. — THE PRIEST	18
VIII. — THE EUCHARIST	20
IX. — SIN	24
X. — HELL	26
XI. — SUFFERING	28
XII. — HOPE AND HEAVEN	31

THOUGHTS OF THE CURÉ OF ARS.

I.

SALVATION.

We know the value of our soul by the efforts that GOD makes to save it and the demon to cast it into perdition. All Hell is leagued against it, all Heaven in its favor. Oh, how inestimable it must be !

To form an idea of our dignity, we must often think of Heaven, Calvary and Hell.

We are as little mirrors in which GOD contemplates Himself.

We are *in* this world but not *of* this world, since we daily repeat these words, Our Father Who Art In Heaven.

We are much, and we are nothing. . . There is nothing more grand than man when we regard his soul, nothing less so when we regard his body.

We occupy ourselves with the body as if our greatest care, our sole care, should be for it ; while, on the contrary, our greatest care should be to despise it.

How shameful it is for man to descend so low — man, whom GOD has placed so high !

Good Christians, who labor to secure their salvation, are always content and happy ; for they enjoy in advance the happiness of Heaven, and they will be happy during all eternity ; while bad Christians, who take no thought for their souls, are greatly to be pitied ; they murmur, they are sad, they are miserable in this world, and they will be so during all eternity. What a contrast !

II.

LOVE FOR GOD.

How beautiful to have a heart with which, little as it is, we may love GOD !

How beautiful to be able to please GOD, lowly creatures though we are !

Man has been created for love ; this explains why he is so borne towards it. From one point of view, he is so great that nothing on earth can satisfy him, and it is only when he turns towards GOD that he is satisfied. Keep a fish out of the water and it dies. Man without GOD is like that fish.

To love GOD ! Oh, how beautiful ! In Heaven alone does one comprehend love. Prayer aids us a little herein, because prayer is the elevation of the soul^{to} Heaven. . .

The more we know men, the less we love them. It is just the contrary in regard to GOD, the more

we know Him, the more we love Him. This knowledge inflames the soul with so great love that it can no longer love nor desire anything but God.

Without faith, one is blind. He who does not see, does not know; he who does not know, does not love; he who does not love God, loves himself, and, at the same time, his pleasures. He attaches his heart to things that vanish like smoke. He can know neither the truth nor aught of good. He can know only falsehood because he has not the light. Had he the light, he would see clearly that all that he loves can bring him only death everlasting.

Except the good God there is nothing solid. As to life, it passes away; fortune may take wings, health be lost, reputation attacked. Everything slips from our grasp.

How greatly are they to be pitied who place their affections upon such things! They do this because they love them too much; but it is not with a reasonable love, it is with love of self and of the world, by seeking self and creatures more than God. Wherefore, they are never tranquil, never happy, but ever restless, harassed, tormented in mind.

Were a king to summon one of his subjects into his presence and say to him "I wish to make you happy; remain with me and share all my goods; I ask only that you will not displease me by any violation of what is right and just," how eagerly and earnestly would not this subject endeavor to satisfy his prince. Now, God makes the same advances to us and we do not appreciate His friendship, we seem to care naught for His promises!

III.

THE PURE SOUL.

When one has preserved his innocence, he feels himself borne aloft by love, even as a bird is borne upward by its wings.

A Christian possessing purity of soul is, in this world, as a bird tied by a string. Poor little bird ! It is ever awaiting the moment when the string shall be cut, that it may fly away.

Good Christians are like those birds with very large wings and small feet, which never rest upon the ground, lest, being unable to rise again, they should be captured. They build their nests in elevated places ; on the summits of rocks ; on the house-tops. Even so should the Christian ever seek the heights. As soon as we turn our thoughts to earth, we are captive.

A pure soul is like a beautiful pearl. When concealed in a shell, at the bottom of the sea, no one admires it, but bring it forth to the sun, it becomes radiant and attracts the admiration of all. It is thus the pure soul, although concealed from the eyes of the world, will one day shine before the angels in the sun of eternity.

The pure soul is a beautiful rose, and the THREE DIVINE PERSONS descend from Heaven to inhale its fragrance.

There is nothing so beautiful as a pure soul ! If this were fully understood no one would ever lose

his purity. The pure soul is disengaged not only from material, and from worldly things, but also from itself.

We must close our heart to pride, sensuality and all other passions . . . for when the doors and windows of a house are closed no one can enter.

All Heaven regards the pure soul with eyes of love !

Pure souls shall form a circle around our LORD. The purer one has been on earth, the nearer will he be to our LORD in Heaven.

When the heart is pure it cannot help loving, because it has found the source of love, which is GOD.

The power that a pure soul has over the good GOD is incomprehensible. It is not that this soul does GOD's will, but that GOD does its will.

GOD contemplates with love the pure soul, and grants all its petitions. How could HE resist a soul that lives only for HIM, by HIM and in HIM ? It seeks GOD and GOD shows HIMSELF to it, it calls HIM and HE comes ; it makes itself one with HIM ; it enchains HIS will.

A pure soul is with GOD like an infant with its mother ; it caresses and embraces her ; and the mother returns these caresses and embraces.

IV.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Man is wholly terrestrial and animal; and only the HOLY SPIRIT can elevate his soul and bear it aloft.

Why were the saints so detached from earth? Because they abandoned themselves to the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT.

They who trust to the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT are truly enlightened. Behold the reason why so many of the unlettered know more than the learned: when one is guided by the GOD of strength and of light, he cannot be deceived.

Like those glasses which magnify every object seen through them, so does the HOLY SPIRIT give us a clear vision of good and evil. With the aid of the HOLY SPIRIT, we see everything standing out in bold characters,—the grandeur of our least actions done for GOD and the enormity of our least faults. As the watch-maker, by means of his glasses, distinguishes the smallest wheels of a watch, even so, by the light of the HOLY SPIRIT, do we distinguish every detail of our poor lives. Then, the least imperfections appear very great and the least sins fill us with horror.

They who possess the HOLY SPIRIT cannot be puffed up with self, because they have so clear a vision of their own miseries. The proud have not the HOLY SPIRIT.

The worldly have not the HOLY SPIRIT, or, if so, it is but for a time ; He lingers not with them ; He is banished by the tumult and noise of the world.

The eye of the world sees not beyond this life. The Christian's eye looks even into the depths of eternity.

For that man who abandons himself to the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT there seems to be no world ; for the world, there seems to be no GOD.

They who trust to the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT experience within themselves every manner of happiness, while bad Christians roll themselves upon thorns and sharp stones.

A soul possessing the HOLY SPIRIT is never weary in GOD's presence : from its heart exudes a balm of love.

Take in one hand a sponge saturated with water, and in the other a stone, press them equally. From the stone you will obtain nothing, while the sponge will yield an abundance of water. The sponge represents the soul filled with the HOLY SPIRIT, and the stone, the hard, cold heart in which the HOLY SPIRIT does not dwell.

When one has the HOLY SPIRIT the heart expands and immerses itself in divine love. The fish never complains of having too much water : and the pious Christian never complains of spending too much time with the good GOD. Some persons find religion wearisome : these have not the HOLY SPIRIT.

If one were to inquire of the damned, " Why are

you in Hell?" they would answer, "For having resisted the HOLY SPIRIT;" and if one were to ask the saints, "Why are you in Heaven?" they would answer, "For having heeded the HOLY SPIRIT."

The good GOD, in sending us the HOLY SPIRIT acts towards us like a great king who charges his minister with the guidance of one of his subjects, saying: "Accompany this man everywhere, and bring him back to me safe and sound." Oh! how admirable a thing it is to be accompanied by the HOLY SPIRIT! Oh! what a good guide! And to think that there are persons who will not follow Him!

The HOLY SPIRIT reposes in the souls of the just as the dove in its nest. He brings forth good desires in a pure soul, even as the dove hatches its little ones.

The HOLY SPIRIT guides us as a mother leads by the hand her two-year-old child, or, as one who has his sight leads the blind.

The HOLY SPIRIT reposes in a pure soul as upon a bed of roses.

The soul which is the abode of the HOLY SPIRIT gives forth a good odor, like unto the vine when in flower.

As a beautiful white dove arises from the wave, and, on land, shakes off the water from its wings, so does the HOLY SPIRIT, arising from the infinite ocean of divine perfections, flutter His wings over pure souls to distil upon them the balm of love.

V.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

The Blessed Virgin is the mediatrix between her Son and ourselves.

The Son possesses the quality of justice, but the Mother is wholly love,

GOD has so loved us as even to die for us ; but in our LORD'S Heart there is justice,—justice a divine attribute. In the Blessed Virgin's heart there is only mercy. . . . Her Son is about to punish a sinner, Mary hastens to stay the uplifted sword, and asks pardon for the unhappy culprit. "Mother," replies our LORD, "I can refuse you nothing. Were it possible for the damned to repent, you would obtain their pardon."

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin is strong, sweet, full of spiritual nourishment.

We do not enter a house without speaking to the porter ; the Blessed Virgin is the portress of Heaven.

Our hands, when they have touched spices, impart fragrance to all that they touch. If we wish to embalm our prayers, let us offer them through the hands of the Blessed Virgin.

At the end of time, the Blessed Virgin will be very quiet, but as long as the world lasts, she will, like a mother with many children, be continually occupied in going from one to another.

VI.

PRAYER.

The Christian's treasure is not upon earth, but in Heaven, and our thoughts should be where our treasure is.

Man has a beautiful office, — that of praying and of loving. To pray, to love, — behold man's happiness upon earth !

Prayer is a foretaste of Heaven, a product of paradise. It always brings sweetness to the soul.

Troubles melt away before prayer as snow before the sun.

Man has two cries, the cry of the angel and that of the beast. The cry of the angel is prayer, the cry of the beast is sin.

They who pray not are bent to earth, like the mole striving to dig a hole in which to conceal itself. They are wholly terrestrial, wholly animal, and think only of the things of time.

What sweet satisfaction do we not experience in forgetting self to seek GOD !

Were Heaven but one day without adoration, it would no longer be Heaven ; and if the damned could adore, Hell would no longer be Hell, despite all its torments.

Alas ! poor reprobates ! they had a heart with which to love GOD, a tongue wherewith to bless Him — such was their destiny, and yet they are condemned to curse Him during all eternity ! If

they had the hope of only once being able to pray, for even a moment, they would so impatiently await this moment, that the hope would be an alleviation of their torments.

Our tongue should be employed only in praying, our heart in loving, our eyes in weeping.

It is always springtime in the heart united to God.

Prayer is an embalmed dew ; but we must pray with a pure heart in order to perceive this dew.

A savory sweetness exudes from prayer, even as the juice from a very ripe grape.

Prayer disengages our soul from matter and elevates it on high even as the fire inflates balloons.

When we pray, let us open our heart to God as the fish spreads out its fins, when it sees the coming wave.

Unhappily, our hearts are not sufficiently free nor pure of all terrestrial affection. A very dry, clean sponge, soaked in a liquid will become thoroughly saturated therewith, while if not dry and clean, it lacks the power of absorption. Even so is it with the heart : when not free and disengaged from things of earth, vainly do we steep it in prayer, it absorbs nothing therefrom.

Heaven dissolves and melts away in the souls of the saints. They bathe themselves and are drowned in its overflowing waters.

As the disciples upon Tabor saw no longer any one save JESUS, so interior souls see on the Tabor of their hearts none but Him. These are two friends that never weary of each other.

The interior life is a bath of love in which the soul immerses itself.

GOD holds the interior man as a mother holds the head of her child in her hands, to cover it with kisses and caresses.

Union with JESUS CHRIST, union with the Cross — behold salvation !

To be loved by GOD, to be united to GOD, to live in GOD's presence, to live for GOD — oh ! beautiful life and beautiful death !

VII.

THE PRIEST.

Who is it that received our soul at its entrance into life ? The priest. Who supplies it with the life-giving nourishment in the strength of which it is enabled to make its earthly pilgrimage ? The priest. Who will prepare it to appear before God, by washing this soul a last time in the Blood of JESUS CHRIST ? The priest, always the priest. And should this soul die, who will resuscitate it, who restore its lost peace and happiness ? Still the priest. We cannot recall a single one of GOD's benefits, without perceiving the priest standing beside it.

GOD's other benefits without the priest would avail us nothing. Of what use to us were a house

filled with gold were there no one to open to us the door? The priest holds the keys of the celestial treasures; it is he who opens the doors leading thereto; he is GOD's treasurer, the administrator of His goods.

After GOD, the priest is all! . . . Leave a parish twenty years without a priest, and the people will adore beasts.

When you see a priest you should say to yourself, "Behold him who has made me a child of GOD, opening Heaven to me by holy Baptism, him who purifies me when I sin, him who feeds my soul!"

We set a great value upon objects that have been placed on the cup of the Infant JESUS and the Blessed Virgin, at Loretto, but are not the fingers of the priest that have touched the adorable flesh of JESUS CHRIST, that have been plunged in the chalice containing His Blood, the ciborium where reposes His Body, far more precious?

The priest is the love of the Heart of JESUS. When you see a priest think of our LORD.

The priest is for you as the mother, the nurse of a babe but a few months' old. She gives it its nourishment, for which it has only to open its mouth. The mother says to her child, "Come, my little one, eat"; and the priest says to you, "Behold the Body of JESUS CHRIST! Take ye and eat! May it preserve your soul unto life everlasting!" Oh, beautiful words!

A child when it sees its mother, runs to her and

struggles against those who would restrain it, it opens its little mouth and puts up its tiny hands to embrace her. So does our soul, in the presence of a priest naturally go forth to meet him.

VIII.

THE EUCHARIST.

All our good works united would not equal one Sacrifice of the Mass, because they are the work of man, while the Mass is the work of GOD. Martyrdom is nothing in comparison to the Mass, martyrdom being the sacrifice which man makes of his life to GOD, and the Mass the sacrifice which GOD makes of His own Body and Blood to man.

When before the Blessed Sacrament, instead of looking around us, let us close our eyes and open our heart; it is then the good GOD will open His. We will go to Him, He will come to us; to ask and to receive will be as a breath from one to the other.

Our LORD has said, "Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, He will give it to you." Never should we have thought of asking GOD for His own Son. But what man could never imagine, GOD has done; what man could never express nor conceive, and what he had never presumed to desire, GOD, in His love, has expressed, conceived

and executed. Could we ever have dared tell God to put His Son to death for us, to give us His Son's flesh to eat and His Blood to drink? Were it otherwise, man would then have been able to imagine things that God could not do; he would have outstripped God in the inventions of love! Ah! no, this were impossible.

All created beings have need of nourishment in order to live; this is why the good God has made the vegetable world with its trees and plants; it is an abundantly served table where all the animals come to obtain nourishment, each taking that which is best suited to it. But the soul must be fed as well as the body. When God wished to provide food for the soul to sustain its strength in the pilgrimage of life, casting His eye over creation, He perceived nothing worthy of this soul. Then looking in upon Himself He resolved to give us Himself for our food. . . . O my soul! how grand thou art, when only God can satisfy thee!

The good God wishing to give Himself to us in the Sacrament of His love, has implanted in us a desire, grand and vast that He alone can satisfy. . . . Beside this beautiful Sacrament, we are like a person dying of thirst on the river shore: he needs but bend his head to quench his thirst! or like one who remains poor while a treasure is within reach which he has only to stretch forth his hand and take!

What does our LORD in the Sacrament of His love? He there holds captive His tender Heart to

love us. From this Heart there flows a stream of tenderness and mercy to wash away the sins of the world.

Without the Divine Eucharist there would be no happiness in this world; life would be insupportable. When we receive Holy Communion we receive our happiness, our joy.

When we communicate, we experience something extraordinary within us, a glow of satisfaction that goes all through our body, and extends even to the extremities. What is this? It is the thrill imparted to every part of our body by the presence of our LORD. We are forced to say with St. John, "It is the LORD!" They who feel nothing of this are greatly to be pitied.

When we come from the altar, were some one to say to us, "What do you bear away with you?" you could answer truthfully, "I bear Heaven within me."

In leaving the Holy Table, we are as happy as the Magi would have been, could they have taken the Infant JESUS with them.

In communicating, the soul revels in the balm of love as the bee amid the flowers.

One knows when a soul has received worthily the Sacrament of the Eucharist. She is so immersed in love, so penetrated therewith and so changed that no one recognizes her as the same, in her actions and words. . . . She is humble, meek, mortified, charitable and modest; she lives in peace with everyone, and is capable of the greatest sacrifices.

At the Day of Judgment, one will see our LORD's flesh shine through the glorified bodies of those who received Him worthily on earth, even as one sees gold shine amid brass, or silver amid lead.

Go to Holy Communion, go to JESUS with love and confidence ! Go to live upon Him, in order to live for Him !

Do not say that you have too much to do. Did not the Divine Saviour say, "Come to me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you ?" Can you resist an invitation so full of affection and tenderness ?

Do not say that you are not worthy. It is true that you are not worthy, but you have great need of Holy Communion. If our LORD had had in view your worthiness, He would never have instituted His beautiful Sacrament of love, for no created being is worthy of communicating, neither saints, nor angels, nor archangels, nor even the Blessed Virgin . . . but He had in view our needs, and we all have great need of it.

Do not say that you are a sinner, too full of faults, and therefore dare not approach. This were equivalent to saying when in bodily ill health that you are too sick to call in a physician or to take medicine.

If you love not the Heart of JESUS, what then will you love ? This Heart is all love. How can you fail to love what is so lovable ?

IX.

SIN.

When we abandon ourselves to our passions, we twine a network of thorns around our heart.

He who lives in sin adopts the habits and ways of the beast, which, being without reason, is governed by its appetites; so man, rendering himself like the beast, loses the use of reason and yields to the movements of his carcass.

A Christian, created to the image of GOD, redeemed by the blood of a GOD! A Christian, the child of a GOD, the brother of a GOD, the heir of a GOD! A Christian, the object of the complacency of the THREE DIVINE PERSONS! A Christian, whose body is the temple of the HOLY SPIRIT . . . behold what sin dishonors! . . .

Sin is the executioner of the good GOD, and the soul's assassin. It is sin that snatches us from heaven to cast us into hell. And yet we love it! . . .

To offend the good GOD who has always covered us with benefits, and to please the demon who can never do us aught but harm — oh! what folly!

The good GOD desires to render us happy, and we refuse to be so. We turn away from Him and give ourselves to the demon! We fly from our friend and give ourselves to our executioner! We waste and abuse the time which He has given us in order that we may work out our salvation! We

make war against Him with the very weapons that He gave us to battle for Him !

To understand that we are the work of a GOD is easy, but that the crucifixion of a GOD should be our work ! ! ! oh, this is something incomprehensible !

Our LORD is like a good mother holding a naughty child in her arms. It struggles to get away, it kicks her, it bites, it scratches her, but to all this she pays no attention, knowing that if she lets go of it, the child will fall ; it cannot walk alone. . . .

Such is our LORD's conduct towards us. . . . He endures all our bad treatment of Him ; He bears patiently with our arrogance ; He pardons all our follies and abuse of Him ; He has pity on us in spite of ourselves.

The good GOD is more eager to pardon a repentant sinner than a mother to snatch her child from the fire.

Picture to yourself a poor mother obliged to make the knife of the guillotine descend upon her own child's head ; this is but a faint picture of the good GOD when He condemns a sinner to Hell !

Our faults are as a grain of sand beside the great mountain of the mercies of GOD.

The mercy of GOD is like an irresistible torrent sweeping away hearts in its course.

Is it not folly indeed for us to prefer Hell, when we can taste, even in this life, the joys of Heaven, by uniting ourselves to GOD by love ? Oh ! folly

incomprehensible folly, that we can never sufficiently bewail !

I know of nothing more pitiable than these poor worldlings. They wear a mantle lined with thorns, and they cannot move without its pricking them ; while good Christians are wrapped in a mantle lined with rabbit skin.

The good Christian travels over life's road in a beautiful triumphal chariot, drawn by angels and guided by our LORD Himself, while the poor sinner is harnessed to life's chariot, and the demon seated therein urges him on with continued lashes.

X.

HELL.

Heaven, Hell and Purgatory have a kind of prelude in this life. Purgatory is in the souls who are not dead to self ; Hell, in the hearts of the impious ; Heaven, in the souls of the perfect which are united to our LORD.

The world conceals from us Heaven and Hell : Heaven, because if its beauty were known, one would seek to go there at any price, the world would be little regarded ; Hell, because if its torments were known, one would wish to avoid them at any cost.

It really seems as if poor sinners do not wish to

wait for the sentence which condemns them to the society of demons; they condemn themselves thereto.

Some lose faith, and see Hell only on entering it.

If a soul in Hell could even but once say, "My God, I love Thee!" there would no longer be any Hell for it. . . . But, alas! this poor soul! it has lost that power of loving which God gave it, but which it did not know how to use. Its heart is dry like the grape that has been through the wine-press. There is no more happiness in this soul, no more peace, because there is no more love! . . .

God's goodness and beauty enkindle the flames of Hell. The damned will say, "Oh, if God had not loved us so much, our sufferings would be less, Hell would be supportable! But to have been so loved by Him! What anguish it gives us now!

What good use would not lost souls make of the time that we lose! Had they but half an hour, that half-hour were sufficient to empty Hell!

If some one could say to the damned, "We are going to place a priest at the gates of Hell, and all who wish to confess have but to go thither," do you believe that even one soul would hesitate to profit by the opportunity? Oh, how quickly Hell would be emptied and Heaven filled!

Well, now, let us remember that we have the time and means that these poor reprobates have not.

For what do men expose themselves to God's curse? . . . For a blasphemy, a bad thought,

for two minutes of pleasure ! Oh, for two minutes of pleasure to lose GOD, one's soul and Heaven forever ! . . .

If you should see a man heaping up faggots to build a pyre and upon asking him what he was doing, he should answer : " I am preparing the fire that is to consume me," what would you think ? And if, when the flames were enkindled, this man should cast himself into them, what would you say ? This is what we do when we commit sin.

It is not GOD who casts us into Hell ; no, it is we who cast ourselves therein by our sins. The damned will say, " I have lost GOD, my soul, Heaven, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault ! " They continually rise up from the furnace, but to fall back therein. They will always feel the irresistible impulse to rise, because created for GOD, the grandest, the highest of beings, the Most High . . . even as a bird in a room ever seeks the ceiling, but to find the ceiling an impassable barrier . . . GOD's justice is the ceiling that opposes the damned.

XI.

SUFFERING.

There are two ways of suffering : to suffer with love, and to suffer without love. The saints suffered everything with patience, joy and constancy,

because they loved ; but we, we suffer with anger, vexation, weariness, because we do not love.

If we loved GOD, we would love crosses, we would desire them, we would take delight in them. We would be happy to have it in our power to suffer for love of Him who vouchsafed to suffer so much for us.

Do you say that this is hard ? No, it is consoling, it is sweet, it is happiness even ! . . . Only we must love in suffering, we must suffer and love.

Oh ! what sweetness those souls experience in suffering who are all for GOD ! Suffering to them is as vinegar mingled with a great deal of oil : the vinegar is always vinegar, but its acidity is scarcely perceived, so disguised is it by the plentiful admixture of oil.

There is no happiness in this world except for those who possess tranquility of soul ; and these, amid the trials of life, taste the joy of the children of GOD.

All trials and sufferings are sweet when united to the sufferings of our LORD.

What matters it if we do suffer ? 'Tis but for a moment, and the price of this moment of suffering we should appreciate could we spend but eight days in Heaven. Ah ! then, indeed, we should not find our cross heavy enough, our trials bitter enough.

Trials for those who love GOD are not chastisements, but graces.

What are twenty years, thirty years, compared to

eternity? . . . And what is it that we have so much to suffer here? Some humiliations, some clashing with others, some cutting words. These do not kill. How good it is to die when one has lived on the cross! We should run to seek the cross as the miser seeks silver.

The cross is God's gift to His friends. We should never consider whence crosses come; they come from God. They are always from God who gives us this means of proving our love for Him.

In the Way of the Cross it is only the first step which costs. The fear of the cross is our greatest cross.

One does wrong indeed who lacks the courage to carry his cross, for, do what we will, the cross clings to us, we cannot escape it.

He who goes forth to seek the cross, finds it before him, he meets it, but he is pleased to meet it; he loves it, he bears it courageously; it unites him to our LORD; it purifies him and detaches him from this world; it removes from his heart all obstacles to his spiritual progress; it aids him on the journey of life, even as a bridge enables us to cross over water.

The worldly are afflicted when they have crosses, and good Christians when they do not have them. The Christian lives amid crosses as the fish lives in the water.

It is only crosses that will reassure us at the Day of Judgment. When that Day comes, how happy we shall be at our past trials, how proud of our humiliations, how rich in our sacrifices!

We must consider the recompense, not the labor. A merchant does not rest his attention upon the toils and troubles of his business, but upon the gain which he expects to derive from it.

Crosses transformed in the flames of love are like a bundle of thorns cast into the fire and reduced to ashes. The thorns are hard but the ashes are soft.

A delicious juice exudes from the grape when put under the press. Even so does our soul, under the press of the cross, produce a juice which nourishes and strengthens us.

When we have no cross, our soul is parched and sterile. When we bear crosses with resignation, we experience much happiness and sweetness! . . . it is the beginning of Heaven.

The thorns give forth balm, and the cross exhales fragrance; but we must press the thorns in our hands, and the cross upon our heart, in order to make them distil the juices which they contain.

Contradictions place us at the foot of the cross, and the cross bears us to Heaven.

XII.

HOPE AND HEAVEN.

There are some persons in this world who hope too much, and others who do not hope enough.

We wish to go to Heaven, but in all ease and comfort, without giving ourselves any trouble to get there ; this is not the way of the saints.

What would you say of a man who should till his neighbor's field and leave his own uncultivated? Ah ! this is just what you are doing. You dig continually in the conscience of others and leave your own conscience fallow. At the hour of death, what will not be our regret at having thought so much about others and so little about ourselves ! for we must render an account not of others, but of ourselves.

We have always two secretaries, the demon who writes down our bad deeds, in order to accuse us, and our Guardian Angel who records the good, in order to justify us at the Day of Judgment.

The demon amuses us until the last moment, just as one amuses a culprit, while awaiting the arrival of the officers who are to arrest him. When they seize him, he cries out, he struggles against them, but, nevertheless, they hold him fast.

When the record of our deeds is laid before God how little that is truly agreeable to Him, will even our best acts contain ! So many imperfections, so many thoughts of self-love, of human satisfaction, of sensual pleasure, of selfishness, will be found mingled with them ! They were good in appearance, but in appearance only, like those fruits which owe their apparent ripeness to the ravages of a worm.

What would you say of a father who treated a

good child and a naughty child alike? You would say, "This father is not just." Nor would God be just if He made no difference between those who serve and those who offend Him.

The earth is a bridge over which we pass from one shore of eternity to the other; it is merely a foundation for our feet to rest upon.

In dying, we make restitution: we restore to earth what it gave us. . . . A little pinch of dust — behold what we shall all become! Is this much to be proud of?

We resemble those little piles of sand heaped up in the road by the wind, appearing for a moment, turning round and round and immediately swept away. . . . Our dead brethren are already reduced to this handful of ashes.

For our body, death is only a purification.

In this world, we must labor, we must combat. We shall have ample time for rest in eternity.

Did we fully comprehend our happiness, we could almost say that we are more fortunate than the saints in Heaven. They live upon their income; they can gain nothing more, while we, we can augment our treasure every moment.

What would you say of a person who should fill his house with a supply of perishable provisions, which must be thrown away because they will spoil, and yet who should make no attempt to collect gold, diamonds, or other precious stones that are imperishable and which would make his fortune? . . . This is just what we do, we attach ourselves

to matter, to that which must perish, and give no thought to the acquisition of Heaven, the only true treasure.

Go from place to place, from kingdom to kingdom, from grandeur to grandeur, from pleasure to pleasure, you will not find your happiness in any of these things. The entire world can no more satisfy an immortal soul than can a pinch of meal put into the mouth of one who is famishing, revive him.

What bliss is not that of the just when, at the end of the world, the soul embalmed with the perfumes of Heaven shall come to seek its body, that once more united they may enjoy God, during all eternity! Then our bodies will come forth from the earth, like linen which has passed through the wash. . . . The bodies of the just shall shine in Heaven as magnificent diamonds, as globes of love!

What a cry of joy will resound through the air when the soul unites itself to its glorified body, now no longer an instrument of sin, nor an occasion of suffering for it! In the balm of love will it revel, as the bee amid the flowers. Behold the soul embalmed for all eternity!

203714 2014 E.

Date Due

Miss Landetta
E6490

JUN 29 '65

JUN 5 1991

MAR 13 2003

®

BOSTON COLLEGE



3 9031 01253782 5

16766

Vianney, John B.

Author

Thoughts of the Cure of Ars

Title

VIANNEY J.

BX4700

. V559

BOSTON COLLEGE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

Books may be kept for two weeks and may be renewed for the same period, unless reserved.

Two cents a day is charged for each book kept overtime.

If you cannot find what you want, ask the Librarian who will be glad to help you.

The borrower is responsible for books drawn on his card and for all fines accruing on the same.



